

INSIDE OUT

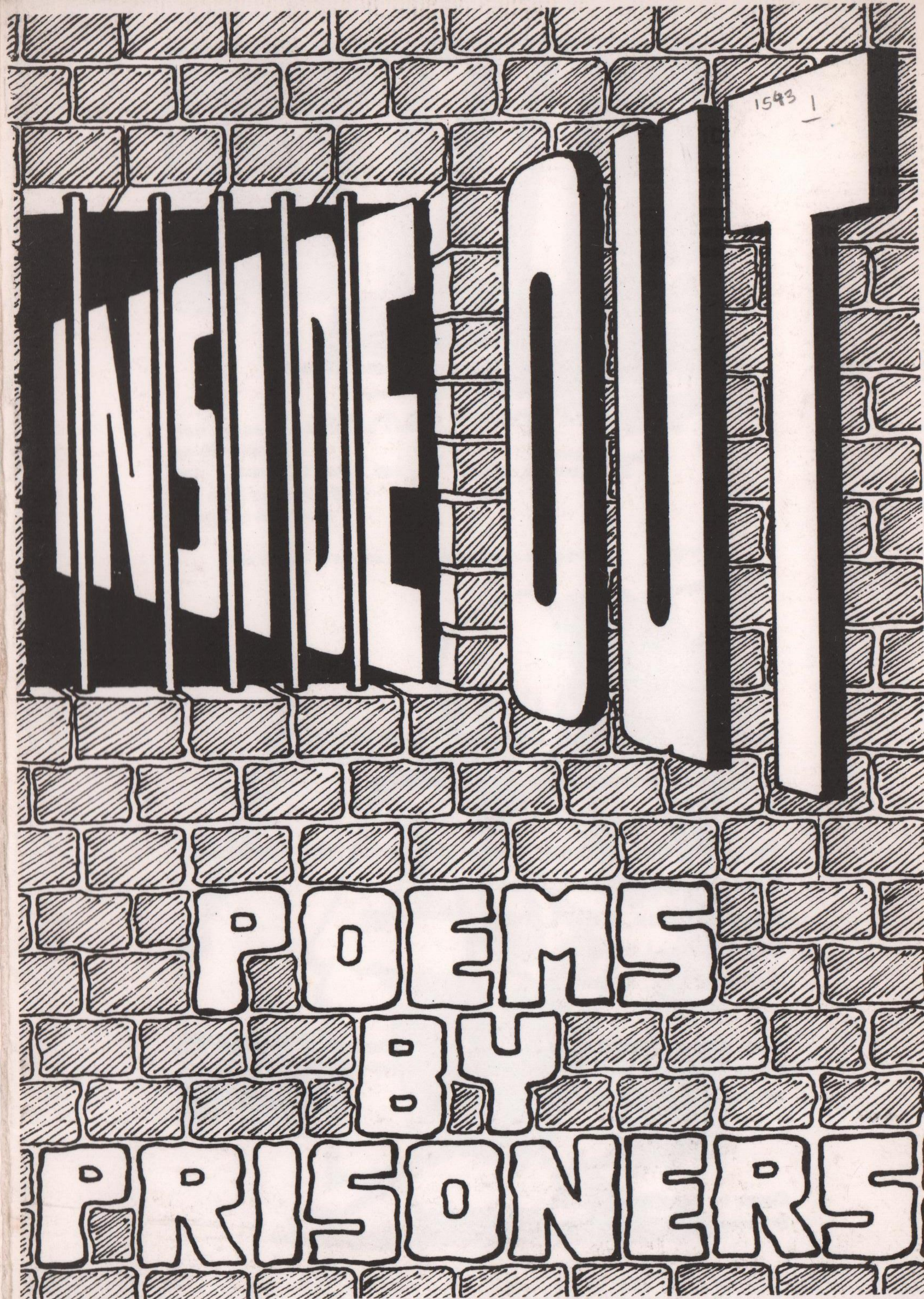
These poems were all written during the 1970's in various prisons in England, apart from one which comes from an English prison in Ireland.

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*The law locks up the man or woman,
who steals the goose from off the common,
But lets the greater villain loose,
who steals the common from the goose.*

— 18th Century verse.

Dedicated to Michael Gaughan, Frank Stagg,
Noel Jenkinson and Sean O'Connail, who died
in English prisons fighting for justice.

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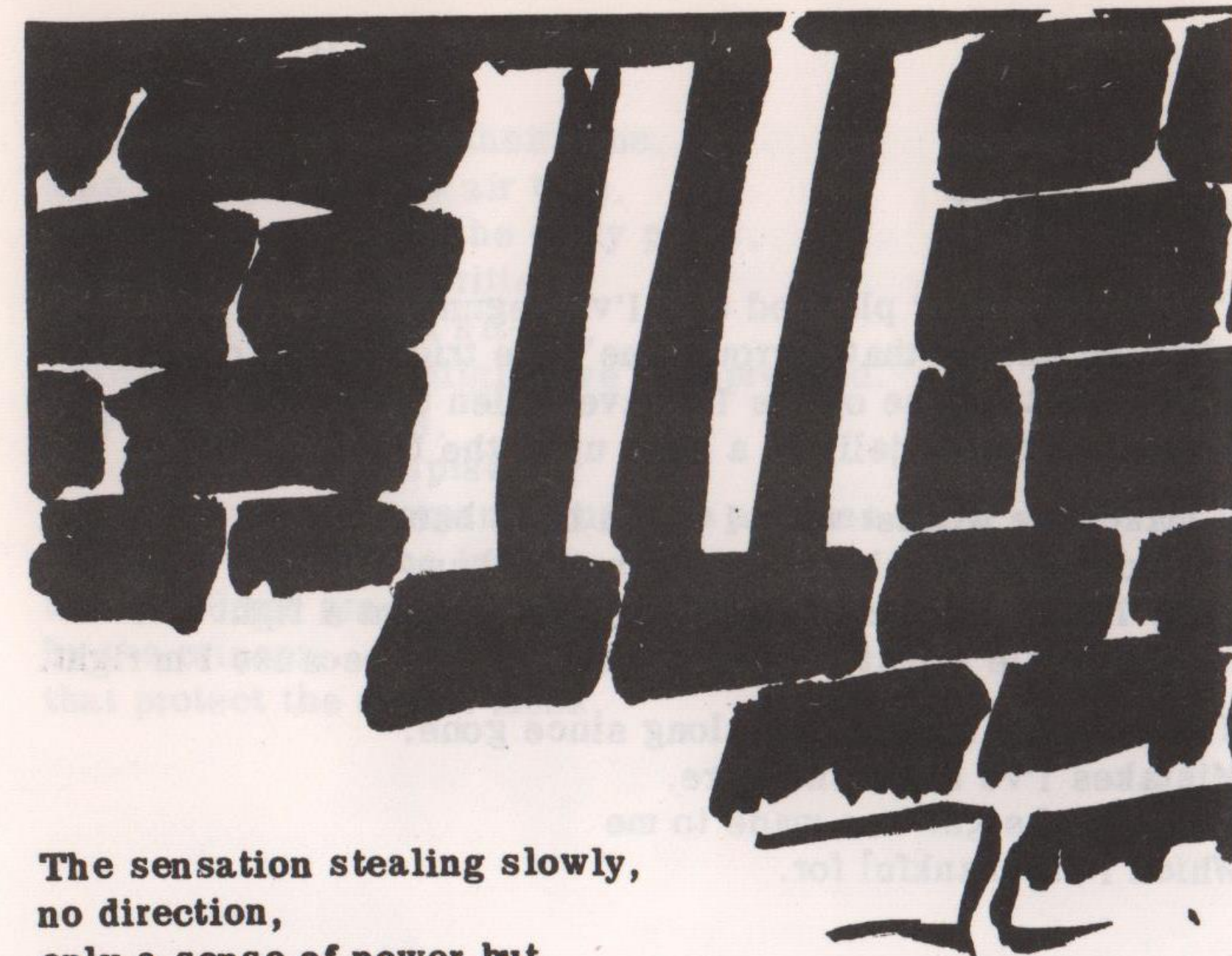
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been paid for will be donated to PROP, the national
prisoners movement.

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The sensation stealing slowly,
no direction,
only a sense of power but
icy cold as fresh fruit
open the dooooooor

for me - I want to escape escape escape

where?



INSIDE OUT

I'm so very, very pleased that I've begun to see
what the people that surround me have tried to do to me.
If it wasn't for the others I'd have fallen that's for sure;
a weeping rotten jelly in a heap upon the floor.

It makes me wonder what I would have become —
a welder or a plumber, or just another bum?
They'll never get me now though; not without a fight
for the battle's just beginning, and I'll win because I'm right.

The chances missed have long since gone.
Mistakes I've made and more.
But gift of sight was made to me
Which I am thankful for.

WHO'S WHO

In subtle, charming, disarming ways
you try to break us and forget us.
We're sick, you say, and should be treated;
you mean defeated - smashed and beaten.

We're ill, you say; oh yes, we're ill and twisted -
and no bleeding wonder.

Tuck them away, these raving rejects,
protect society from these monsters,
keep them happy and safely processed
with table tennis and t.v.

Every weekend show a movie,
let them out to see the sun.

You're the worst; the charming system,
changing fear to burning hatred,
turning white against his brother,
driving brothers against themselves.

FOLK SINGERS...

Folk singers give us their time,
disc jockeys give us air time,
you read about us in the daily press,
about us books are written,
demonstrations even sit-ins,
through anger and religion we're repressed.
Psychos analyse us,
the people they despise us,
sociologists they organize us with a guess.
But none care in the least
that problems are increased
by the prisons
that protect the social mess.

SPEAKERS CORNER

In circles high and low we meet
Ego battles harsh and sweet.

Warping truths
and let-down youth
with water flowing cries
compete.
Telling tales of woe...

...defeat.

Oscenities...
...yes and no,
discussions —
— fast and slow.

We talk on endlessly,
boring ramblings, pouring slowly,
tumbling from the mouth.
Words like tacky glue
sticky molasses oozing on —

— forever.

TONIGHT I FINISHED PAINTING MY CELL

I have finished you at last
All I have done is now ended
I poured and I mixed
I joined and I tested
until I found the right hue
I brushed and I thrust
and covered your gloom
Gave you a new face
I am pleased with myself
For my effort and strength
I am pleased with you
your looks no longer hurt
Although the fact still remains
your four walls are the same
I've seen you before
I may see you again
But you're cleaner now
and I'm playing an institute game
I now smile and can laugh
They'll never know why I changed.
Please Sir can I have parole now?!!!

By R.A.Poynter. (From THAP News)

AWE

Take note of the laughter
but look for the pain
believe the sweet music
but don't become chained.
Seek, for you're justified;
in anger we'll cry,
tomorrow awareness
and then you must die.

In battles we'll meet you
with right on our side.
Don't ask for forgiveness
'There is none', we'll cry.

We'll beat by the hundreds
and thousands and more
aware of our future...
... aware of the call.

WORKER

Tall, handsome, rugged man,
a giant in navy blue,
brass buttons shining through.

Highly polished shoes, mirrored,
boots blossom blacked,
jacked and heavy,
thick leather, held together
in self-defence... against whom?
...he knows.



REBELLING...

Rebelling against the unknown enemy,
self taught protection,
survival determined by living
and experience.

DEMOCRAZY!!

Going home and leaving here
to the life they call out there,
fooling myself that I'll be free
living in England's **democracy!!**

TOM HOKEY AND THE WORKERS' SONG

Old Tom Hokey ploughs the field;
ploughs the field that people need.
Old Tom Hokey feeling tired,
stops to have a sandwich... and while he eats he thinks...

All the sowers sow the seeds;
sow the seeds the people need.
All the hoers hoe the seeds,
how the seeds and grow it.

All the cutters cut the wheat;
cut the wheat for us to eat.
All the threshers thresh the wheat,
thresh the wheat and weigh it.

All the stackers stack the wheat;
stack the wheat for us to eat.
All the storemen store the wheat,
store the wheat and count it.

All the drivers freight the wheat;
freight the wheat for us to eat.
All the millers buy the wheat,
buy the wheat and husk it.

All the grinders grind the wheat;
grind the wheat for us to eat.
All the weighers weigh the flour,
weigh the flour and bag it.

All the storemen store the flour;
store the flour people need.

All the loaders load the flour,
load the flour and freight it.

All the slitters slit the flour;
slit the flour people need.
All the mixers mix the flour,
mix the flour and check it.

All the farmhands grow the wheat;
grow the wheat for us to eat.
All the farm hands check the wheat,
check the wheat and cut it.

All the weighers weigh the wheat;
weigh the wheat for us to eat.
All the sackers sack the wheat,
sack the wheat and stack it.

All the counters count the wheat;
count the wheat for us to eat.
All the loaders load the wheat,
load the wheat and freight it.

All the huskers husk the wheat;
husk the wheat for us to eat.
All the sifters sift the wheat,
sift the wheat and grind it.

All the baggers bag the flour;
bag the flour for us to eat.
All the stackers stack the flour,
stack the flour and store it.

All the drivers freight the flour;
freight the flour people need.
All the bakers buy the flour,
buy the flour and slit it.

All the checkers check the dough;
Check the dough that people eat.
All the kneaders knead the dough,
knead the dough and tray it.

All the bakers bake the bread;
bake the bread that people eat.
All the coolers cool the bread,
cool the bread and tray it.

All the vans deliver bread;
deliver bread that people eat.
All the shops unload the bread,
unload the bread and shelve it.

All the owners own the goods!
Own the goods the workers make!
All the workers eat their goods!
And owners reap a profit!!! ...and then Tom Hokey sang a song...

All us workers built the world;
fed the world and made it grow.
All the rulers eat the bread,
but do they ever sow it?

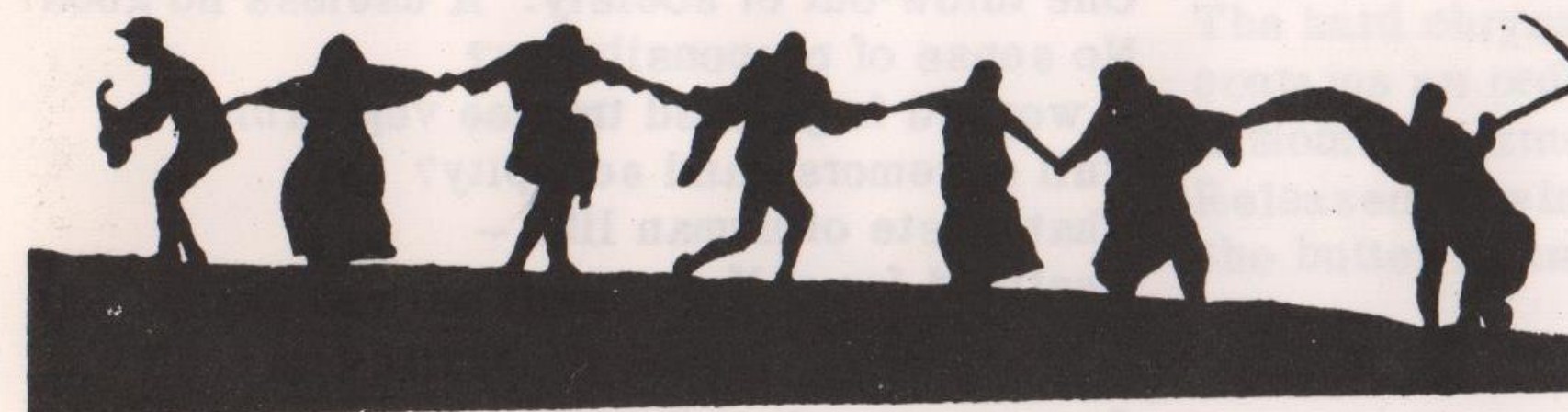
All the tray men tray the dough;
tray the dough that people eat.
All the provers prove the dough,
prove the dough and bake it.

All the trayers tray the bread;
tray the bread that people eat.
All the loaders load the bread,
load the bread, deliver it.

All assistants shelve the bread;
shelve the bread that people eat.
All the people slice the bread,
slice the bread and eat it.

Old Tom Hokey eats his bread;
eats his bread that he has made.
Old Tom Hokey's being conned,
and old Tom Hokey knows it!

Workers of the world unite!
We are strong and they are weak.
If we unite and fight the State,
we will surely kill it.



WASTED

Oh yes you tried, I'll give you that.
So silently impaled
your warping will upon my mind,
the weakness soon unveiled,
keeping liberty away
meaningless and incomplete,
reckless child transformed to man
and promise to deceit.

But from the void of hopelessness
with paranoid feats,
reformed by systematic plan
prepared from used repeats,
you helped me face the world outside
with built-in shame and more,
complexes to keep me straight;
so, complete defeat assured.

ENTER...

Enter — one poor stifled lost soul,
Freedom loving, reckless boy sheep,
A floating mess of irresponsibility,
One throw-out of society. A useless no good?
No sense of responsibility?
A worried frightened trainee vegetable?
Full of remorse and self-pity?
What waste of human life —
Destined for self-destruction.
Not a hope for him?

Just goes to show how wrong you can be.

WINE TEARS

Trembling hands reached out toward
the cool glass neck shape
stood blurred and twisted,
eyesight misted as lightening strikes
inside your head.
Painful anguished hands reach out,
stretching clumsily forward
spilling hate the liquid pain
across the ash lined drink stained floor.
Sweat covered and shaking
slippery fingers grasping;
fouled and dirty sheets.....

drooping down.

The wretchedness and vileness felt
with every new day's dawn.
Shame and degradation
depths of gloom, humiliation,
despondently crashing down...
broken.....

Shattered slivered pieces glitter
reflecting tears and gasping sighs
the cries, the vacant stare toward
the space where stood your fate....
....the bottle.

TANKA

The hard chrysalis
contains an ordered nightmare
armoured against truth.
Released to wind and sunlight
the butterfly knows the void.

SONNET

Under the pear trees, a lawn mower sings
Of this and other summers. Cut grass scents
the years; dead faces in deck chairs reminding
the throat to tears, the heart to old torment.
In this stable loft lies my beginning
and my end; old trunks, forgotten fragments
in the ordered nightmare of unknowing;
the I that was, within the integument.

And now I am not. Like the butterfly
that dreams, encased in polished chrysalis,
imaginary worlds; until release
to summer sun and wind and empty sky,
to the vast anonymous conscious I
of Nature, without meanings, end or peace.

I am very uncertain of my future.
I am not even certain of my past,
consciousness is painful.

CROPS

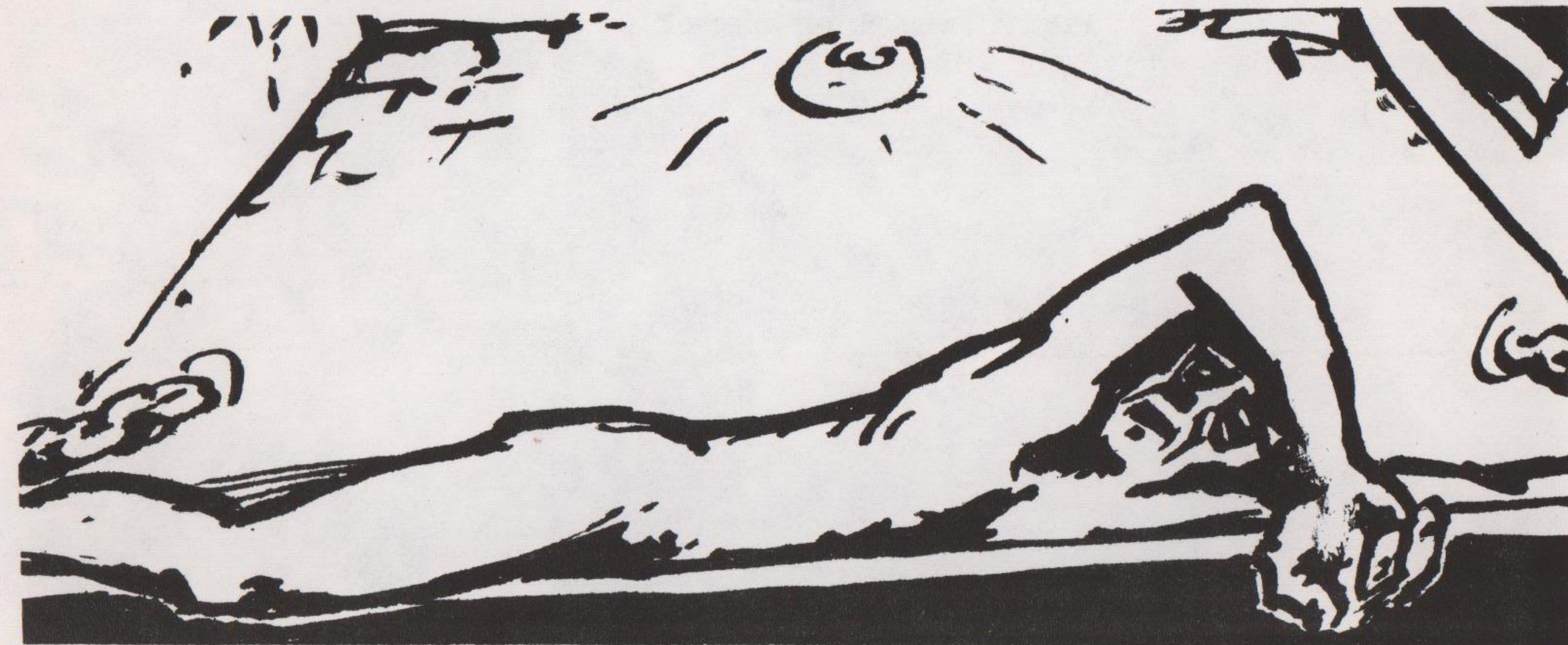
Farmer Giles has cut his rye;
Oh my! Oh my!
Farmer Bates has cut his wheat;
Och, the thieving hares in it!

Farmer Turvey's cut his barley;
Ripe and early, ripe and early.
And where day breaks, rousing not,
Farmer Weary's cut his throat.

JUST A FEW THOUGHTS I'VE HAD ON MY MIND

Last night passed so slowly,
Each minute brought its own eternity
In the dead of night the wind cut through the barbed wire jungle
And a gate clanged shut somewhere in its midst.
The rain came on, the wind escaping unnoticed through
The bars in the blackness,
Bringing a shiver when it found human flesh
The wind died and silently returned
Filling the air with loneliness and reality,
The blanket man turned over upon his damp-scarred mattress,
Clutching his only possession, his constant companion,
An old shabby blanket.
The dawn came, bringing an unwelcome visitor – another day!
From the barbed wire the bird sang,
Unaware of the silent humble appreciation,
Within earshot footsteps thundered and keys screamed on steal,
Hatred and hostility lay waiting to attack the sleeping resistance.
The bird panicked, leaving its song behind,
To be swallowed up as the dawn broke.
Tension came on the heels of the torturer, another eternity began.
The blanket man arose, damp, cold and hungry,
Clutching his only possession, his constant companion,
An old shabby blanket.

By T.Kelly, of Turf Lodge, Belfast, one of the hundreds of
Irish Prisoners of War who have been staging a blanket protest
in H-Block, Long Kesh, since September 1976.
(From Republican News)



CLOSE UP

Dirty, dingy windows, high above my head,
I can see them when I'm standing...

standing on my bed.

Heavy iron bars; shadowed across the walls,
the murky walls;

paintwork cracked... flies.

Hard iron bed, creaking...

rattling on throughout the night...night.

so cold the night...

Big, big door, dark and dangerous....

strong and thick like the eye...

the eye that peeps through...

the hole,

the hole.

How I hate you, eye,

Pretty, painted, plastic pot...

fitted with a lid,

keeps out the flies...

the flies...

THE REVOLUTIONARY

I am of the exploited:

Of Exploited Humankind;

I am of those who suffer and sweat,

Who toil and create the wealth of the Earth:

For I am of those who are robbed —

Whose stomachs are plundered

By worms with wolves heads.

I am of the order-takers:

Of order-taking Humankind;

I am of those who are regimented,

Who are the pawns of the Manipulators:

For I am of those with a number and not a name —

Whose lives are not their own,

And are imprisoned at birth.

But I am also of those who revolt:

Of Revolutionary Humankind;

I am of those who will not be subjugated,

Who will not stay on their knees:

For I am of those who struggle —

Whose sinews and vision will soon prevail,

And we, the People, will be our own Masters.

By Michael Tobin, Chelmsford Prison.

(First published in the Industrial Unionist)